Municipal Economic Development Best Practices
April, 2022

CHOOSE Connecticut
AdvanceCT works to build a place where business, government, higher education and non-profits come together to implement high impact and inclusive economic development solutions to advance the overall competitiveness of Connecticut.

We are a private nonprofit economic development organization that drives job creation and new capital investment in Connecticut through business attraction, retention, and expansion, in close cooperation with state, regional, and local partners.
CURRICULUM

1. Your Town: municipal economic indicators in a regional and state context

2. Economic Development: what is it and why is it important

3. On the Ground: roles and responsibilities of the town’s economic development team
What are your primary assets?

What are your challenges in the next ten years?

What are your game changers?
What are your primary assets?

What are your challenges in the next ten years?

What are your game changers?
SECTION ONE

Your Town: Municipal Economic Indicators in a Regional and State Context
**Regional, State and National Context**

**Demographics**
- Needed services differ depending on population characteristics
- Population characteristics to build on

**Employment and Commuting**
- Industry patterns and resilience to structural and cyclical economic changes

**Fiscal Health**
- Resources for and constraints on your local government’s ability to act

**Housing**
- Important for your town’s fiscal health and to attract and retain residents
TOTAL POPULATION

% Growth 2000 - 2019

3%
New London County

.5%
Town of Ledyard

POPULATION BY AGE

POPULATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Ledyard
- High school graduate: 23%
- Associate's degree: 8%
- Bachelor's degree: 22%
- Graduate or professional degree: 17%

Connecticut
- High school graduate: 27%
- Associate's degree: 10%
- Bachelor's degree: 22%
- Graduate or professional degree: 19%

US
- High school graduate: 27%
- Associate's degree: 9%
- Bachelor's degree: 20%
- Graduate or professional degree: 13%

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five Year Estimates 2015-2019. For population 25 years and older.
Economic Development: What is It and Why is It Important?
WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Why should you care?

• Conscious activity
• Fiscal health
• Character of your community
How do you define your economic region?

Changing world of economic development:
The Playing Field = The World

WHAT IS YOUR PLACE IN A REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ECONOMY?
WHAT IS YOUR REPUTATION IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETPLACE

What is the Marketplace
What is the Product
Who is the Customer

In the absence of a clear brand, who is determining your Reputation
“We want to locate where we are wanted, where government appreciates our contribution to the economy, and values local ownership, where people understand that it is a good thing for the community if we make money. We want to work with officials who are focused on growing the economic pie, and who value our business activity because we export goods and services out of the Pioneer Valley, yet the profits stay in the valley. We want local government to create a favorable playing field for all business activity, and to be active in keeping track of the “customer satisfaction level” of its businesses. We want to be in a town where government is strategically focused on providing a business-friendly place.”

– The Holman Doctrine
HOW DO DIFFERENT AUDIENCES VIEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

- Universally positive
- Great in the right place
- Healthy skepticism
- Don’t change the character of our community
- NIMBY
Is there a difference between:

Economic Development
Community Development
Real Estate Development
## TRANSACTIONAL vs TRANSFORMATIONAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transactional</th>
<th>Transformational</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do the deal</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make the numbers work</td>
<td>Creating attractive and inviting places</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get building permit and other approvals</td>
<td>More complex and comprehensive ways of measuring success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not much community input</td>
<td>Measure real community-wide benefits and outcomes, not just activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused on specific property</td>
<td>Consistent with community vision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking for financial incentives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiscal impact</td>
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10 PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES

1. Community is the expert
2. Create a place, not a design
3. Partners
4. Observe
5. Vision
6. Short term improvements
7. Triangulate
8. “It can be done”
9. Form supports function
10. You are never finished
### Economic Development Choices: Big Box vs. Main Street Development

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COSTCO</th>
<th>DOWNTOWN CORNERSTONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Consumed (acres)</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>0.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Prop. Taxes /Year</td>
<td>$366,477</td>
<td>$71,680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Prop. Taxes /Acre</td>
<td>$19,288</td>
<td>$398,222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residents/Acre</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs /Acre</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>22</td>
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</table>

Enfield Big Box vs. Downtown Mixed-Use Development
LOCAL CHOICE: DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS
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On the Ground: Roles and Responsibilities of the Town’s Economic Development Team
DEFINITION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

• Business retention
• Business expansion
• Business recruitment
• Business creation
• Character of your community
WHAT DO YOU CONTROL LOCALLY?

- Land use regulations
- Property taxes
- Creating great places
- Relationship with local businesses

WHAT DEFINES YOUR ECONOMIC FUTURE?

WHAT ARE YOUR CHOICES?
WHO IS ON THE TEAM?

- Elected officials/municipal offices
- Boards and commissions (P&Z, conservation, etc.)
- Business community and citizens
- Schools and universities
- Chambers, nonprofits and regional ED organizations
- Advocates: housing, transportation, preservationists, environmentalists
- Commercial real estate industry: brokers, developers and site selectors
- Government: state and federal
One of the best business incentives is a streamlined regulatory process.
Responsibilities of Economic Development Commission & Staff

Planning Function
  • What do we envision for the future of development in town?

Marketing Function
  • How do we share information about the town with businesses and information about businesses with consumers?

Advisory Function
  • How do we connect our businesses to the information and resources they need to thrive?

Advocacy Function
  • How do we communicate the importance of economic development-related policies and procedures to those who may not be familiar with them?
COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Planning
- Adopt strategic plan of economic development
- Contribute to the POCD
- Identify areas of town for development
- Grant opportunities

Marketing
- Common understanding of what the town is (and unique attributes)
- Elevator speech
- Maintain contact with commercial real estate community
- Realistic understanding of your community’s current economic situation – know what you control and collect data
- Spread good news – eNews, social media, local media, ribbon cuttings
- Heritage tourism – Enhances quality of life
COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Advisory

• Single point of contact – liaison between the business and the Town
• Business visitations
• Ambassador efforts and partnerships
• Anchor institutions
• Financing solutions – DECD, local banks
• Incentives – local and state
• Workforce strategy that includes businesses, colleges and high school
• Shovel-ready initiatives – DOT permits, wetlands flagging, utility extensions
• Utility contacts
• Host events to cement connections between businesses, governmental agencies, and other relevant organizations

Advocacy

• Intergovernmental relations – know your reps, grants
• Initiate an application to change a zoning district, propose an economic development zone, present proposed regulations
• Appear before other land use commissions meeting and present position
• Review all other commissions agendas and minutes to keep abreast of developments and timelines
INCREASING VALUE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

• Physically
• Socially
• Economically
What did you learn?
Where do you go from here?

NEXT STEPS
AdvanceCT is a private nonprofit economic development organization that drives job creation and new capital investment in Connecticut through business attraction, retention, and expansion, in close cooperation with state, regional, and local partners.